

Emergency Responder

WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION



WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT

November-December 2001



Mark Kogle of the Emergency Management Division briefs other state Emergency Operations Center personnel during the activation for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. (EMD photo by Bob Isaman).

Sept. 11 activation tops off at 77 consecutive days

The Washington Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation for the World Trade and Pentagon terrorist attacks ended at 5 p.m. Nov. 26, setting a record of 77 consecutive days for center activation.

But the attacks will leave a much greater impact on the emergency management operations throughout the state, according to Ken Parrish, state EOC supervisor.

Washington Emergency Management Division's (EMD) operations unit and duty officers "were extremely busy—more so than with any other hazard we have had to deal with," said Parrish "It was learn as you go for most of us."

As the terror attacks led to concerns about biological and chemical attacks, demands for

information flooded into the state's duty officer communications center from citizens as well as local, state and federal agencies.

During the last three weeks of October, state duty officers received an average of two calls a day about suspicious powders or liquids. But most of the calls came to local responders.

"Local agencies were overwhelmed with people afraid to open mail and packages," Parrish said. In turn, local and federal agencies asked the EMD about protocols and procedures for these threats.

Agencies not only faced chemical and biological terrorism for the first time, but also lacked information

EMD, ACS sign new pact to manage disaster donations

Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) and Adventist Community Services (ACS) reached agreement in early December on a new memorandum to handle donated goods and services in future Washington disasters.

"It establishes a whole new framework to handle donated goods and services for disasters in our state," said John Vollmer, administrator of EMD's individual assistance program. "The agreement can enable our state to better coordinate public donations and get help faster to persons in need."

The agreement obligates ACS, a regional network of community-based volunteers, to take the following actions:

- Implement a donated goods and services management plan within 72 hours of notification by EMD.
- Establish a network with local emergency managers to distribute donated goods.
- Manage a multi-agency warehouse and supervise local volunteers and staff in receiving, sorting, packing and inventorying donated goods and services.
- Provide leadership and training for community based volunteers to coordinate the flow of incoming undesignated goods.
- Develop a local donated goods management committee consisting of other state volunteer resources willing to assist in the donations management process.

Under the agreement, EMD will:

- Identify and procure a logistic center for the collection and distribution of donated goods and services.
- Assist ACS in coordinating the distribution of goods and services to the local jurisdictions.

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Eric Holdeman, King County emergency management director, talks to Seattle media at the Nov. 2 groundbreaking of the county's new 911 Communications Center and Emergency Coordination Center. Located near Renton's District Court, the \$34 million facility is scheduled to open, August 2003. (Photo by King County Emergency Management.)

Flood planning grant applications due Feb. 14, 2002

Washington communities can apply for about \$176,900 in federal grants to develop local flood mitigation plans and to carry out projects that reduce the risk of flood damage to structures that have flood insurance.

As part of the Emergency Management Division's annual process, we administer Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants for flood damage reduction that include \$160,560 for projects and another \$16,400 for the flood hazard reduction planning. All grants also will require a 25 percent local match.

To be considered for the project grant funds, communities must have a FEMA-approved flood hazard reduction plan, must participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and must have zoning and building code authority for their community.

Proposed projects must:

- reduce the number of repetitively or substantially damaged insured structures and associated claims in the NFIP.

- respond to the needs of communities that are participating in NFIP.
 - complement other federal and state disaster mitigation programs.
- The deadline for the planning grant applications is Feb. 14, 2002, and the project grant applications are due March 14, 2002.

For applications and further information, contact Martin E. Best, state hazard mitigation officer, at (253) 512-7073 or by e-mail at m.best@emd.wa.gov.

RFO relocates in Olympia

The Nisqually Earthquake Recovery Program will move in mid-to-late January to new quarters at 120 Henry St. in Olympia, one block north of the Daily Olympian newspaper office. The office's main reception phone number will be (360) 570-6305.

About 30 persons will work in the new office that is expected to operate for at least two years to close out the public assistance portion of the earthquake recovery program, according to Diane Offord, state coordinating officer.

SBA declares five farm disasters in Washington

Businesses in several Washington counties may apply for low interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to offset economic injuries suffered in the drought and storms of the past year.

The declared events, and the eligible counties for each SBA disaster, are:

- Wind, rain and hail on June 26 and 27 in Benton, Grant and Yakima counties – Benton, Grant, Yakima, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Klickitat, Skagit, Snohomish and Walla Walla counties. The application deadline is June 17, 2002.
- Drought conditions in 2000 and 2001 in Morrow County, Oregon – Benton County. The application deadline is July 1, 2002.
- A hailstorm on June 8, 2001, in Chelan County – Chelan, Douglas, King, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit and Snohomish counties. The application deadline is July 2, 2002.
- A late spring freeze that occurred May 21-24, 2001, in Lincoln County – Adams, Ferry, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Spokane, Stevens and Whitman counties. The application deadline is July 2, 2002.
- A drought that began Jan. 1, 2001, in Asotin, Benton, Douglas, Klickitat, Lincoln and Stevens counties – Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Skamania, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman and Yakima counties. The application dates are Feb. 25, 2002, in Klickitat County and April 23, 2002, in Asotin County because they were included in a previous declaration for the same drought. The application date for all other counties in July 2, 2002.

Information and application forms may be obtained by writing to the SBA at P.O. Box 13795, Sacramento, Calif., 95853-4795, or by calling 1-800-488-5323.

New electricity, reduced demand boost energy outlook

New electrical generation and aggressive steps to reduce electrical demand have all but eliminated a chance of power shortages this fall and winter in the Pacific Northwest.

The October power forecast now shows it is very unlikely the region will experience an energy shortage this winter, said Mark Anderson, Energy Policy Specialist with the Office of Trade and Economic Development, Energy Division.

A regional power survey last May forecast a nearly 12 percent chance of power shortages this winter because of tight western power supplies and low water levels for hydroelectric power generation.

Anderson told a November meeting of state emergency liaisons

and volunteers that electrical load had been reduced about 20 percent since July, two factors for which were shutting down the region's aluminum plants and energy conservation.

The region also added about 2,180 megawatts of new electrical generation during the year through the startup of new combustion turbines and wind generators, he said. Another plus for the region was the ability of Canadian dams on the upper Columbia River to store more water for electrical generation.

"There is no reason why we should face the same kind of problems next year as this year," Anderson said. "If we get an average snowpack (for hydroelectric generation), we'll be just fine" in 2002.

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about recommended actions, he said. With the lack of national information, responders and emergency managers in Washington "had to set up our own networks."

The networking brought together local, state, federal and private organizations that hadn't previously had close working relationships.

EMD worked with federal, state and local law enforcement and health agencies to send to local and state agencies in mid-October a protocol for handling suspicious packages and letters. Local and state agencies also received information about Washington's Committee on Terrorism and about the state's effort to address bioterrorism.

Hazard threat warnings were difficult to share because the information that the state received from national agencies often was very vague, said Parrish. In addition, he said there was no uniform security classification system in place so the sensitive national information could be shared with key individuals at state and local levels.

In the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, he said security clearances for

sensitive information should be standardized, and the protection and distribution of sensitive information needs to be reviewed.

The terrorism attacks also forced EMD and other emergency management agencies to examine their own vulnerabilities and physical security, Parrish said, adding that EMD has bolstered its own physical security.

"We were living in a crystal palace feeling that we were invulnerable before Sept. 11," he said.

The attacks have made everyone develop a "much keener awareness of what is happening around us," he said. There is more attention to preparedness and to reporting unusual or suspicious activities.

EOC staff members such as Parrish also had to deal with the horrific visual images of the World Trade Towers destruction for days on end in their work. In the EOC, that meant full-color images of the event projected on 10-foot by 12-foot screens as well as on 16 other television monitors around the room.

Parrish said he stopped watching news programs when he was at home after work. "I watched the science fiction channel to escape."

FEMA X director named

State Rep. John Pennington, R-Carrolls, was named Dec. 7 as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Director for Region 10 that includes Alaska, Oregon, Idaho and Washington.

Pennington was first elected to the Washington State House of Representatives in 1994, and has been the Republican Speaker Pro Tempore since 1996. In his four terms of office, Pennington has been a member of the House Finance, Natural Resources, Rules and Health Care committees.

He also chairs the National Conference of State Legislatures Advisory Council on Energy and represents the Pacific Northwest states on an Environment Protection Agency's national air quality panel.

DNR appoints geologist

Ron Teissere of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Geology and Earth Resources Division was named State Geologist by Lands Commissioner Doug Sutherland.

Teissere, a 16-year DNR employee, was the assistant state geologist for regulatory programs since 1999. He previously worked in the department's aquatic lands division and as a geologist specializing in upland mineral, oil and gas resources.

As state geologist, Teissere also was appointed co-vice chairman of the state's Seismic Safety Committee that recommends earthquake policy to the state's Emergency Management Council. He succeeds Ray Lasmanis, who was named manager of the DNR's Southwest Region headquartered in Castle Rock.

WSSPC honors school unit

"Washington State Tsunami Curriculum K-6 and 7-12" received an "Awards In Excellence 2001" honor from the Western States Seismic Policy Council. The award was presented to Washington Emergency Management Division's Plans, Exercise, Education and Training Unit at the council's November meeting.

Personnel

Gail Harris was named administrative secretary in the Programs Unit, Nov. 16. She previously worked with the Washington State University Research Center in Pullman.

Heike Syben was recognized Nov. 29 for her five years of state service. She currently is assigned to the Nisqually Earthquake Public Assistance Program and previously has worked with the E911 Program.

Michael Namchek started in November as the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program electronics technician. He transferred to Washington Emergency Management Division from Washington State University Television and Network Services.

John Taylor began a two-year Governor's Executive Fellowship as a planner with WEMD on Oct. 16. His principal assignments will involve the state's role in the Emergency Management Assistance Compact and in the emergency return of expatriates to the United States.

Training classes open

Contact Rosanne Garrand at (253) 512-7048 for information about the following training courses:

- Feb. 8, Pre and Post Earthquake Evaluation of Buildings, Camp Murray.
- Feb. 14, Donations Management, Clark County.

Woodbury to lead NEMA

Glen Woodbury, Washington Emergency Management Division director since 1998, was elected National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) president in the organization's fall balloting.

Woodbury will serve as president-elect until September 2002 and then begin a one-year term as president of the association that represents emergency management directors of 59 U.S. states and territories. The association membership also includes federal government representatives as well as organizational, corporate and individual members. NEMA shares information on disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery issues and communicates emergency management perspectives to the public and policymakers.

Thurman receives awards

Washington Emergency Management Division's Barbara Thurman captured seven awards in the International Association of Emergency Managers 2001 Media Awards Contest. The awards, announced at the association's November meeting, were:

First Place: Special Publications, Educational Campaign Division for the "Disaster Preparedness Month Campaign Packet"; Special Publications, Brochures Division for the "Chemical Emergency Brochure";

Special Publications, Posters Division for "When the Ground Shakes...Drop, Cover and Hold!"; Special Publications, Reference Materials Division, for "Preparing for Hazardous Chemical Emergencies in Your Community"; and Audio Visual, Videotapes Division for "Drop, Cover and Hold for Middle and High School Students."

Second Place: Special Publications, Reference Materials Division for "Washington State Tsunami Curriculum."

Third Place: Audio Visual, Video Tapes Division for "Preparing Your Office for an Earthquake."

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Glen Woodbury, Director

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